

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1 1. A method for displaying a uniform resource locator (URL), the method comprising:  
2 accessing a URL corresponding to a link presented for selection to a user;  
3 identifying a portion of the URL that corresponds to a hostname component of the  
4 URL;  
5 displaying the URL; and  
6 visually distinguishing the hostname component of the URL from other components  
7 of the URL.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1 further comprising displaying an electronic document, wherein  
2 the link is presented contemporaneously with the electronic document.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2 wherein a software application used to display the electronic  
2 document automatically identifies the portion of the URL that corresponds to the  
3 hostname component of the URL.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL when a pointer is positioned over the  
3 link in the electronic document.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL when the link is selected.
- 1 6. The method of claim 5 wherein the link is selected through manipulation of a pointing  
2 device.
- 1 7. The method of claim 5 further comprising displaying a warning message in response to  
2 the selection of the link.
- 1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the warning message requires a response before  
2 performing a redirection to the URL.

1 9. The method of claim 7 wherein the software application automatically determines  
2 whether the URL is suspicious and displays the warning message, only if the URL is  
3 determined to be suspicious.

1 10. The method of claim 2 wherein the link corresponds to a selectable button in the  
2 electronic document.

1 11. The method of claim 2 wherein a software application automatically determines whether  
2 the URL is suspicious and visually distinguishes the hostname component of the URL  
3 from other components of the URL only if the URL is determined to be suspicious.

1 12. The method of claim 3 wherein the software application is selected from the group  
2 consisting of a word processing application, an electronic mail application, an instant  
3 messaging application, and a browser.

1 13. The method of claim 2 wherein the electronic document is selected from the group  
2 consisting of a word processor file, an electronic mail message, an instant message, and a  
3 web page.

1 14. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished by using display characteristics for the hostname component that differ  
3 from display characteristics of other components of the URL.

1 15. The method of claim 14 wherein the display characteristics for the hostname component  
2 comprise at least one of:

3 a color for the hostname component that differs from a color of other components of  
4 the URL; or

5 a font style for the hostname component that differs from a font style of other  
6 components of the URL; or

7 a font size for the hostname component that differs from a font size of other  
8 components of the URL; or

9           a font type for the hostname component that differs from a font type of other  
10       components of the URL; or  
11       a display effect for the hostname component.

1       16. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2       distinguished by repositioning the hostname component within the displayed URL.

1       17. The method of claim 16 wherein repositioning the hostname component comprises  
2       displaying the hostname component at the beginning of the displayed URL.

1 18. The method of claim 1 wherein the URL, with the hostname component of the URL  
2 visually distinguished from other portions of the URL, is displayed in a user interface of a  
3 browser application.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the URL, with the hostname component of the URL  
2 visually distinguished from other portions of the URL, is displayed in an address field of  
3 the browser application user interface.

1 20. The method of claim 18 wherein the URL, with the hostname component of the URL  
2 visually distinguished from other portions of the URL, is displayed in a status bar of the  
3 browser application user interface.

1 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the URL, with the hostname component of the URL  
2 visually distinguished from other portions of the URL, is displayed in the status bar of the  
3 browser application user interface when a pointer is positioned over a hyperlink displayed  
4 by the browser application.

1 22. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises at least a  
2 second level domain name.

1 23. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises at least a  
2 portion of the URL that follows an "@" symbol in the URL.

1 24. The method of claim 1 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises the first  
2 and second level domain names.

1 25. An article comprising a machine-readable medium storing instructions for causing one or  
2 more processors to perform operations comprising:

3 presenting a link in an electronic document for selection to a user, wherein the link  
4 corresponds to a URL;

5 processing the electronic document to identify the URL and to identify a portion of  
6 the URL that corresponds to a hostname component of the URL;

7 displaying the URL on a user interface; and

8 visually distinguishing the hostname component of the URL from other components  
9 of the URL.

1 26. The article of claim 25 wherein the machine-readable medium stores instructions for  
2 causing one or more processors to perform further operations comprising:

3 receiving a user selection of the link; and

4 displaying the URL on the user interface, with the hostname component of the URL  
5 visually distinguished from other components of the URL, in response to the user  
6 selection of the hyperlink.

1 27. The article of claim 26 wherein the link is displayed on the user interface and the user  
2 selection of the link comprises one of receiving an indication that a pointer is positioned  
3 over the link or receiving an indication that the link is selected through manipulation of a  
4 pointing device.

1 28. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL by using display characteristics for the  
3 hostname component that differ from display characteristics of other components of the  
4 URL.

1 29. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL by repositioning the hostname  
3 component within the displayed URL.

1 30. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL by displaying the hostname component  
3 of the URL in isolation from the other components of the URL.

1 31. The article of claim 25 wherein the machine-readable medium stores instructions for  
2 causing one or more processors to perform further operations comprising:  
3 determining that the URL is suspicious; and  
4 displaying a warning message in response to the determination.

1 32. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises at least a  
2 second level domain name.

1 33. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises at least a  
2 portion of the URL that follows an "@" symbol in the URL.

1 34. The article of claim 25 wherein the hostname component of the URL comprises the first  
2 and second level domain names.

- 1 35. A system for displaying a uniform resource locator (URL), the system comprising:  
2 means for presenting a link in an electronic document for selection to a user, wherein  
3 the link corresponds to a URL;  
4 means for processing the electronic document to identify the URL and to identify a  
5 portion of the URL that corresponds to a hostname component of the URL;  
6 means for displaying the URL on a user interface; and  
7 means for visually distinguishing the hostname component of the URL from other  
8 components of the URL.

1 36. A method for displaying a uniform resource locator (URL), the method comprising:  
2 accessing a URL corresponding to a link presented for selection to a user;  
3 identifying a portion of a URL that corresponds to a hostname component of the  
4 URL; and  
5 displaying a warning message relating to the hostname component of the URL.

1 37. The method of claim 36 further comprising determining that the URL is suspicious,  
2 wherein displaying the warning message is performed in response to the determination.

1 38. The method of claim 36 further comprising requiring a user to acknowledge the hostname  
2 component of the URL before providing access to an electronic file identified by the  
3 URL.

1 39. The method of claim 36 wherein the warning message identifies the hostname component  
2 of the URL.

1 40. The method of claim 36 wherein a software application automatically identifies the  
2 portion of the URL that corresponds to the hostname component of the URL.

1 41. The method of claim 36 wherein the warning message displays the entire URL.

1 42. The method of claim 41 wherein the hostname component of the URL is visually  
2 distinguished from other components of the URL.

1 43. The method of claim 36 wherein the warning message is displayed in response to a  
2 selection of the link.